



city of  
**greenville**

# News Release

## **GREENLINK AND MUNICIPAL PARTNERS CELEBRATE NEW GOLDEN STRIP ROUTE**

**GREENVILLE (SC)** Greenville City Council member Gaye Sprague was joined this morning by Greenville County Council Chairman Butch Kirven, Mauldin Mayor Dennis Raines, Simpsonville Mayor Perry Eichor, Greenville Transit Authority Board members and Greenlink staff at the Mauldin Cultural Center to celebrate the new Golden Strip Route, which provides service from downtown Greenville to the cities of Mauldin and Simpsonville.

Three 35-foot, low-floor buses are dedicated to the route (two to provide daily service and one spare) and the route has a one-hour headway. Service is provided from 5:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. Monday through Saturday. In an effort to build ridership, the Golden Strip Route has been fare-free since it commenced on October 15; however, beginning January 1, 2013, the fare will be \$1.50 per trip, with free transfers.

The Golden Strip Route is 32 miles round trip and the original route included 19 stops, but several new stops have been added since October. Popular stops along the Golden Strip Route include C.F. Sauer, Mauldin Cultural Center, Simpsonville Activity & Senior Center and Walmart on Grandview Road in Simpsonville. The route initially originated at the University Center, but as a result of increased passenger interest in traveling to downtown Greenville, the route now originates at the Greenlink Transfer Center on McBee Avenue. Greenlink staff will continue to fine-tune the stops along the route to meet passenger needs, and once the stops have been finalized, they will identify the most feasible locations for an initial five new bus shelters along the route.

According to David Mitchell, GTA Board Chairman, implementation of the Golden Strip Route positions Greenlink to become a truly regional public transportation provider, one of the goals outlined in the Greenlink Transit Vision and Master Plan, which was completed in 2010. "Extending the Greenlink footprint to incorporate Mauldin and Simpsonville provides service to unserved areas and improves connectivity within Greenville County at no cost to their constituents," said Mitchell. "By working together and leveraging our resources, we're now able to connect Mauldin and Simpsonville not only to Greenville, but also to each other, which citizens who attended our public meetings suggested was equally important."

Various concepts for transit service from the Mauldin/Simpsonville area have been developed over the years. The 2005 Mauldin-Simpsonville Urban Area Transit Development Plan reviewed and evaluated five potential services that included express, demand response, hybrid, extension of existing fixed routes and a rideshare program. The plan's two concepts for express bus service both connected to downtown Greenville

In 2009, following passage of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), Greenlink prepared a proposal which outlined general elements of a memorandum of understanding between the City of Mauldin, the City of Simpsonville and Greenville Transit Authority (GTA)/Greenlink for

development of a limited scope transit service in the Golden Strip area. The proposal suggested that the service could be funded principally by the utilization of federal formula funds already apportioned to the two cities, as well as by ARRA grant funding, which would be utilized to purchase three transit buses and related passenger amenities such as shelters and security equipment. FTA approved an ARRA grant of \$1.2 million for Greenlink in September 2009.

In March of this year, Mauldin City Council and Simpsonville City Council passed resolutions authorizing Greenlink to apply for funding to administer the new bus route for Greenville, Mauldin and Simpsonville. Subsequently, city planners for Mauldin and Simpsonville worked with Greenlink's planning staff to devise a proposed route and numerous public meetings were held over a six-month period in various locations throughout both cities to solicit citizen input. The proposed route was changed to incorporate the public input and fixed stops were established. The three buses were delivered in September and service commenced on October 15.

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